

The President. Very, very warm and very hospitable reaction. A lot of people coming out, for which I'm grateful.

Q. What did you get?

The President. Vanilla custard. It's highly recommended. I'm recommending vanilla for Hillman [G. Robert Hillman, Dallas Morning News].

Q. You are dripping. You need a napkin.

The President. I'm going to get one in a minute. Would you like some?

Q. No, thanks.

The President. I'm trying to get you a little national publicity.

Q. I think I've got all I need. [Laughter]

The President. I enjoyed talking to you, girls. Enjoyed talking to you. Thank you.

All right, let's go back to work.

Q. First a candy store and now ice cream, sir?

The President. I'm loading up, carbo-loading for the weekend. [Laughter]

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:50 p.m. at Leon's Frozen Custard. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on Senate Action To Block a Constitutional Amendment on Marriage

July 14, 2004

I am deeply disappointed that the effort to pass a constitutional amendment affirming the sanctity of marriage as being between a man and a woman was temporarily blocked in the Senate.

Activist judges and local officials in some parts of the country are not letting up in their efforts to redefine marriage for the rest of America—and neither should defenders of traditional marriage flag in their efforts.

It is important for our country to continue the debate on this important issue, and I urge the House of Representatives to pass this amendment.

Statement on Congressional Passage of the "Project BioShield Act of 2004"

July 14, 2004

During this time of threat to the homeland, I commend Congress for passing the "Project BioShield Act of 2004." This legislation will strengthen our ability to protect Americans against biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological threats. It will speed the Government's ability to turn promising scientific discoveries into necessary countermeasures, provide for rapid stockpiling of critical new drugs and vaccines, and allow the Food and Drug Administration to make treatments available quickly to Americans in emergency situations. By bringing researchers, medical experts, and the biomedical industry together in new and innovative ways, we will not only help protect the homeland but also gain insights into other diseases. This will break new ground in the search for treatments and cures, while strengthening our overall biotechnology infrastructure. I look forward to signing this vital piece of legislation.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 15.

Remarks in Ashwaubenon, Wisconsin

July 14, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Thanks for inviting me. It's good to be here in Ashwaubenon, Wisconsin. Thank you so much.

We've been having a great bus tour. I've been traveling all across this important State asking for the vote. I'm here to ask for your help. What a fantastic trip we've had. I did stop at Leon's Custard Shop. I also stopped in West Bend at Mick's Candyman Store. It's been a day of great excitement and high caloric intake. [Laughter] But I love being back here. It's good to see the Cheeseheads coming in. I know it's not the time of year, but I probably need to come back next fall, don't I? One thing is for certain: The Green Bay area is Bush-Cheney country.

I'm here to ask for your help. Give me 4 more years, this country is going to be safer and stronger and better.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm sorry Laura is not traveling with me today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. That's generally the reaction. [Laughter] I interpret that to mean, "Too bad she didn't come and you didn't stay at home." [Laughter] I don't blame you. She's a fabulous woman. I'm really proud of her. She's a wonderful First Lady. I'm going to tell you what I intend to do for 4 more years, but perhaps the best reason to put me back in is so she'll be the First Lady for 4 more years. Fortunately, however, a member of my family is traveling with me today. I want to thank one of our daughters, Barbara, for coming today. Thank you for being here, Barbara.

I'm also traveling today with a great American, a person who served our country so well in my Cabinet, and a person you trained very well as your former Governor, and that's Tommy Thompson.

You've got a really fine Congressman from this area. Congressman Mark Green is a decent, honorable man. And I appreciate his wife, Sue, joining us today. Thanks for coming, Sue. I'm glad you're here.

State Treasurer Jack Voight is with us as well. I want to thank the mayors who are here. I want to thank those who serve at the State level and at the local level for your willingness to serve your communities. I appreciate so very much the grassroots activists who are here.

I'm going to thank my friend Dennis Miller, who's joined us today. I appreciate my friend Wayne Newton for joining us today. Thanks for coming. I know Brian Noble is here. Thanks for coming, Brian. I appreciate you being here to help warm up the crowd.

But most of all, I want to thank you all for being here. It means a lot. I need your help. They have a—get on the web page and call up georgewbush.com. It's a place where you can find out how to volunteer to turn out the vote. Get your neighbors to register. We have a duty in this country to vote. Gather the people up and encourage them to do

their duty. You might suggest they vote Bush-Cheney while they're heading to the polls.

And when you're gathering up that vote and when you're talking to your friends and neighbors, tell them that this administration has faced serious challenges over the last 3½ years, and we've given serious answers.

We came to office with the stock market in decline and an economy headed into recession. We acted. We delivered historic tax relief, and over the past 3 years, America has had the fastest growing economy of any major industrialized nation.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning. We pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We have captured or killed many key leaders of the Al Qaida network. We will stay on the hunt until justice is done.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. We acted against two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We have liberated 50 million people. Today, America is proud to lead the armies of liberation.

I'm running with a great American in Dick Cheney. He's a solid, solid citizen. And when he and I came to Washington, the military was underfunded and underappreciated, so we gave our Armed Forces the resources and respect they deserve. And today, no one can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

These accomplishments are important to the security and prosperity of our country. You see, it's the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. The President has to make hard decisions and keep his commitments. And with your help, that is how I will continue to lead our country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm looking forward to the race. I'm looking forward to it. I'm looking forward to taking our positive and hopeful message all across the country. And it's going to be a tough race.

Audience member. [Inaudible] [Laughter]

The President. My opponent is an experience United States Senator. He's been in Washington a lot longer than I have.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, he's been there long enough to take both sides of just about every issue. He voted for the PATRIOT Act, for NAFTA, for the No Child Left Behind Act, and for the use of force in Iraq. Now, he opposes the PATRIOT Act, NAFTA, the No Child Left Behind Act, and the liberation of Iraq.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. If you disagree with the Senator on most any issue, you may just have caught him on the wrong day. Recently, in the Midwest, he even tried to claim he was the candidate with conservative values.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I know—I know. [Laughter] That's what he said. [Laughter] It's kind of hard to square that with his previous statement when he said, "I'm liberal and proud of it." [Laughter] Now he has a runningmate. Senator Kerry is rated as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate, and he chose a fellow lawyer who is the fourth most liberal Member of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In Massachusetts, that's what they call balancing the ticket. [Laughter]

Great events will turn on this election. The person who sits in the Oval Office will set the course on the war on terror and the direction of our economy. I'm here asking for the vote and your help because I have a vision and a strategy to win the war on terror and to extend peace and freedom throughout the world. I'm asking for the vote because I have a plan to continue to create jobs and opportunity for every single American. I'm asking for the vote because I have a plan to continue to rally the compassionate spirit of America, so every single citizen has a chance to realize the great promise of our country. I'm asking for the vote because with your help, America will be safer and stronger and better.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. A big issue for every family is their tax burden. By providing the larg-

est Federal tax relief since Ronald Reagan was President, we have left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and helping create new jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Federal Government would have.

Our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. Since last summer, our economy has been growing at its fastest rate in nearly 20 years. In less than a year's time, we have added more than 1.5 million new jobs. Here in this great State, your unemployment rate has dropped to 5.1 percent. The manufacturing sector is growing stronger, with 64,000 new jobs created since January. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high. Business investment is growing. Consumer confidence is at a 2-year high. Personal incomes are on the rise. The tax relief we passed is working.

My opponents look at all this progress and somehow conclude that the sky is falling. [Laughter] But whether their message is delivered with a frown or a smile, it's the same old pessimism. And to cheer us up, they propose higher taxes—

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. —more Federal spending—

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. —and economic isolationism.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The surest way to end economic growth and put Americans out of work is their plan. The Nation is on the path to progress and opportunity, and we're not going backwards.

To sustain economic growth, we need to keep taxes low. Higher taxes would now undermine growth and destroy jobs. To help grow the American economy and create more jobs for American workers, I've got a better idea than my opponent's plan: Congress needs to make tax relief permanent and not raise taxes on the American people.

In order to make sure our economy continues to grow, we've got to be smart about how we spend the money that you send to Washington, DC. We need fiscal discipline. We need to make sure Congress doesn't overpromise and underdeliver. It all starts with understanding whose money we spend

in Washington, DC. It's not the Government's money we spend; it's the people's money we spend in Washington, DC.

In order to make sure people can find work and people are willing to invest so small businesses can thrive and grow, we need to stop frivolous lawsuits. You cannot be pro-small-business and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. *[Laughter]* I made my choice: I will continue to push Congress for reform to end the junk lawsuits.

In order to make sure that Americans can find work not only this year but in the coming years, we must make sure Americans have affordable health care. And that means giving people better access to association health plans and giving Americans more control over their health care through tax-free health accounts. It means making sure that the customer is in charge of health decisions, not the Federal Government. And to make sure the healers are able to do their work and people can afford health care, we must have medical liability reform at the Federal level.

Listen, to make sure we continue to grow our economy and people can find work, we need an energy policy. I submitted a plan to the United States Congress 2 years ago. It's a plan that modernizes our electricity system. It's a plan that encourages alternative sources of energy. It is a plan that encourages conservation. But it's also a plan that recognizes we can explore for energy in environmentally friendly ways. For the sake of national security, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of oil.

I suspect we may have some farmers here. This farm economy is strong in Wisconsin. And that's good news, and one of the reasons why is because we're selling farm products all around the world. You see, the job of the President is to open up markets. We need a level playing field when it comes to trade. This country can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere with free trade and fair trade, and that's exactly how I will continue to lead.

I've got a plan to make sure this economy continues to grow so America is stronger. It's a plan that understands the role of Government is not to create wealth but to create an environment where the small-business

owner can flourish, where the farmer and rancher can make a living. My plan is pro-entrepreneur, pro-small-business, pro-farmer. Give me 4 more years, and this economy will continue to grow.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. America's future also depends on our willingness to lead in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong, but we still face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded but not broken. Terrorists continue to attack in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

After the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, this Nation resolved and I resolved to bring justice to the terrorists, wherever they dwell. We resolved to hold regimes that hide and sponsor terrorists to account. Afghanistan was a terrorist state, a training camp for Al Qaida killers. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy, is an ally in the war on terror. And because we acted, now young girls go to school for the first time in their lives.

Iraq, only last year, was controlled by a dictator who threatened the civilized world, a dictator who had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. For decades, he tormented and tortured the people of Iraq. Because we acted, Iraq is a free and sovereign nation. Because we acted, its dictator now sits in a prison cell and will receive the justice he denied so many for so long.

September the 11th, 2001, taught a lesson I will never forget and a lesson this country must never forget. America must confront threats before they fully materialize. I remembered that lesson. I remembered the past behavior of Saddam Hussein, and my administration looked at the intelligence and we saw a threat. The United States Congress, including members of both political parties, looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. The previous administration and the Congress looked at the same intelligence and

made regime change in Iraq the policy of our country.

In 2002, I went to the United Nations. And after deliberation, the United Nations Security Council yet again demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. And as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein made the choice. He refused to comply. The free world had spoken, and he refused to comply with the request of the free world. Knowing what I knew about him, remembering the lessons of September the 11th, I had a choice to make: Either to trust a madman or to defend the United States of America. And given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Although we have not found stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, I believe we were right to go into Iraq and America is safer for it. We removed a declared enemy of America who had the capability of producing weapons of mass destruction and could have passed that capability to terrorists bent on acquiring them. In the world after September the 11th, that was a risk we could not afford to take.

We still have important work to do in that country. We've got hard work to do. Our immediate task in places like Iraq and Afghanistan is to capture or kill the terrorists and foreign fighters. See, you can't talk sense into the terrorists. You can't negotiate with the terrorists. You cannot sit back and hope for the best. We must stay on the offensive. We will engage the enemies in Afghanistan, Iraq, and around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

Listen, there's no such thing as perfect security in America. The threats are real to the homeland. We know the terrorists want to strike us. They want to spread fear and disrupt our way of life. We've reorganized our Government to better protect the homeland. You just need to know there are a lot of really good people at the Federal level, at the State level, and at the local level doing everything possible to protect our fellow citizens. And I know I speak for everyone here when I say thanks to the police and the firefighters and the emergency teams of the great State of Wisconsin.

We'll defend our homeland; we'll be relentless in our pursuit of the terrorists

abroad. Yet in the long run, our safety requires something more. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror in the Middle East, the poverty and the hopelessness and the resentments that terrorists can exploit. Life in that region will be far more hopeful and peaceful when men and women can choose their own leaders and the people can decide their own future.

By serving the ideal of liberty, by standing true to our beliefs, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we also serve the deepest ideals of our country. We understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

America is leading the world, and the world is changing because of our leadership. Just 3 years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. And now, there's a democracy rising in that troubled part of the world, and America is safer for it. Three years ago, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists on missions of murder and terror. Now, the Pakistan Government has joined us in the war on terror, and Pakistan forces are rounding up the terrorists, and America is safer for it. Three years ago, in Saudi Arabia, terrorists found little opposition. Now, the Saudi Government has joined the war on terror, and they're bringing to justice Al Qaida terrorists, and America is safer for it. Three years ago, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Now, thousands of Libya's chemical munitions have been destroyed. Libya has given up nuclear processing equipment, and the American people are safer for it. The world is changing for the better. Three years ago, the dictator in Iraq had the capability of producing weapons of mass murder. And now, that dictator faces justice, and the American people are safer for it.

We will finish the work of democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq. A free society in Afghanistan and Iraq makes America more secure. Free societies are peaceful societies. And the good people in those countries are standing up for a free society. They have got good, strong leadership now. You see, these people want to be free. And therefore, the security forces in Iraq, made up of Iraqis,

are now going after the terrorists that are trying to stop the advance of freedom. And the peoples in those countries can count on America. We promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, and to set them on the path to democracy. And when America gives its word, America keeps its word.

Our men and women in the military are keeping America's commitment, and they're taking great risks on our behalf. At bases around our country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I recently met with Rita and Ken Jerabek. Their son, Ryan, died in service to our country. They died so America would be more secure. I told the Jerabeks the best way to honor the memory of their great son, Ryan, was to complete the mission. A free society in Iraq will make the world a better place. I'm honored that Rita and Ken are with us tonight. God bless them.

When we put our troops in harm's way, it's important they have the very best we can give them. We owe it to our troops, and we owe it to their loved ones. Last September, I proposed supplemental funding to support our military in its mission. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, for hazard pay, for health benefits, ammunition, and fuel, and spare parts. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority voted against that legislation. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote by saying this: "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." [Laughter] End quote. Now he is offering a different explanation. Earlier this week, he said he was proud that he and his runningmate voted against the funding for the troops. Now listen, he's—

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's entitled to his view. But Members of Congress should not vote to send troops into battle and then vote against funding them. I will continue to stand with our troops and make sure they have what they need in order to complete the mission. As Commander in Chief, I am proud

to lead a great military full of decent and honorable citizens.

America is leading the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us defeat terror. There's over 60 nations involved with the Proliferation Security Initiative; nearly 40 nations are involved in Afghanistan; over 30 nations involved in Iraq. And I appreciate the contributions from those countries. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of foreign countries.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. This Nation is prosperous and strong. Yet, we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the character of our citizens. The other day, my opponent said that a bunch of entertainers from Hollywood conveyed the heart and soul of America.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I believe the heart and soul of America is found in places like Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Our Nation is strong because of the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We are strong because of the institutions that help give us direction and purpose, our families and our schools and our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for high standards in our public schools, local control of our public schools, accountability in our public schools so no child is left behind in America. We stand for the fair treatment of faith-based groups so they can receive Federal support for their works of compassion and healing. We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which have helped millions of Americans find independence and dignity. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every person matters. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. The culture of this country is

changing from one that has said, “If it feels good, just go ahead and do it,” and “If you’ve got a problem, blame somebody else,” to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you’re fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you’re worried about the quality of the education in your community, you’re responsible for doing something about it. If you’re a CEO in corporate America, you’re responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we’d like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn’t one of those times. You and I are living in a period where the stakes are high, where the challenges are difficult, a time when firm resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It’s a day I’ll never forget. Workers in hardhats chanted, “Whatever it takes.” A fireman or a policeman—I don’t know which one—grabbed me and said, “Do not let me down.” As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of our country, whatever it takes.

In these times, I’ve also been witness to the character of our Nation. I’ve seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I’ve seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I’ve seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. And we’ve all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most. We will need all these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity to every corner of our country. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And

we know that for our blessed land, the best days lie ahead.

Thanks for coming. May God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:17 p.m. in the Resch Center at the Brown County Veterans Memorial Complex. In his remarks, he referred to comedian Dennis Miller; entertainer Wayne Newton; and Brian Noble, head coach, arenafootball2’s Green Bay Blizzard.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Budget Amendments

July 14, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2005 budget amendments for the Departments of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor. In addition, I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2004 language proposal for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Overall, the discretionary budget authority proposed in my FY 2005 budget would not be increased by these requests.

The details of these proposals are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 15.

Remarks on Signing the Identity Theft Penalty Enhancement Act

July 15, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. Welcome to the White House.

[At this point, the lights in the room flickered.]

The President. Thanks for coming. *[Laughter]* Welcome to the White House. *[Laughter]*

We’re taking an important step today to combat the problem of identity theft, one of